

*ALTAVISTA
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH*



THE LINK

MAY 1, 2020

OUR VISION, OUR HEARTS, AND OUR DOORS ARE
ALWAYS OPEN



Rev. Eduardo Soto, Jr.
434-369-5286, office
434-219-5648, mobile

ALTAVISTA PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
707 BROAD STREET
P O BOX 126
ALTAVISTA, VA 24517
434-369-5286 – Office phone
434-369-1101 – FAX
office@altapres.org - email
www.altapres.org - web site

In her book *Forgiveness*, Marjorie Thompson asks us to look at the relationship between forgiveness and reconciliation. “Is it possible to be reconciled to someone without forgiveness? Does forgiveness lead naturally to reconciliation? Are we still obliged by Christian principle to forgive if no reconciliation seems possible?” This can be difficult sometimes because we deeply desire to have repentance as a “prerequisite to forgiveness.” It “satisfies our innate sense of justice,” asserts Thompson. “If as Christians we cannot retaliate or satisfy our thirst for vengeance, at least we can require repentance.” This idea of justice is something we cherish. I certainly do. If there is a wrong out there, then a correction of that wrong should be the goal, or at the very least sincerely sought after. “Repentance and restitution show that we are holding one another accountable for our actions and that there are tangible and painful consequences for breaking the laws that govern our life together.” But Jesus shakes this up a bit, doesn’t he? Many of Jesus’ healing and forgiving episodes are done almost spontaneously.

Jesus presents to us what Thompson calls “restorative justice.” Central to this is a restoration of harmony within a community or relationship, rather than retribution for the breach of some law. This is not about isolation and punishment, but about reconciliation and accountability. We are called to be reconciled as new creations and in new relationships. With this reconciliation comes a notion of accountability, where the offense that broke the relationship ought not to be repeated. Retributive justice has as a core



“ I strongly encourage each of you to pray and read the Bible daily”

assumption that the offender is just going to go back out there and do it again. Restorative justice, however, assumes that the community as a whole will work towards an education that will foster mutual respect and accountability.

The way of the cross is this restoration. The cross event restores us to the position of friend of God, the original post Adam & Eve held before the Fall. The Church is the community that restores sinners, and not just punishes them, demanding retribution. Restoration and reconciliation is not just a one-way, downward direction, it is the work of the Church. The way of the cross does not simply end with our reception of reconciliation. Instead, we are to continue that restoration and extend reconciliation through the sharing of divine love. The way of the cross is healing the wounds around us. The wounds we witness and the wounds we've created. It isn't enough to have reconciliation only between ourselves and God or ourselves and others. Our reconciliation to God and our neighbors is the very way of the cross. When we choose to walk this path as Christians, we are walking the path that Jesus places before us. Sometimes that path is challenging. Sometimes we even lose sight of the path. But if we open our hearts to the love of God and to the love of all of our neighbors—even our enemies—then we walk this path by faith and not by human sight.

Ed Soto

**Altavista Presbyterian Church
Session highlights
April 19, 2020 meeting**

- Reviewed the March, 2020 Treasurer's Report.
- Authorized the Treasurer to apply for funds under the CARES Act on behalf of APC.
- Accepted Dot Hogan's resignation with regret.
- Approved minutes of the March 15, 2020 Congregational meeting & the March 15, 2020 Stated Session meeting as presented.
- Elected the following as officers of APC, Inc. for church year 2020-2021: Kevin deBernard, President & Director; Chip Roark, Vice-President & Director; Dennis Janiak, Treasurer & Director; John Erb, Secretary & Director & Janette Walker, Director.
- Joys & concerns of the congregation were identified. Moderator Ed prayed for those listed & to close the meeting.



Given the restrictions on public gatherings, we—like many others—have had to resort to virtual interactions.

Every week, Pastor Ed posts a video in his Question and Answers series. These are published on Fridays and can be found at www.altapres.org/pastorqa. On that same page you will find a midweek devotional, which is published in conjunction with Betsy and Berry Hill Presbyterian Church.

Starting on April 26, Pastor Ed will begin a sermon series from I Thessalonians, which will be recorded as a truncated Lord's Day worship. These can be found at www.altapres.org/worship-services. There you can also watch past services going back to 2017!

You can also interact with us by liking our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/altavistapc) and sharing posts, pictures, and prayers. These unusual times require us to make unusual sacrifices. I long for the day we can worship together as the body of Christ, but until that day, we will make do. Remember, the church isn't four walls and a roof, it's you!

	Birthdays	Anniversaries
1	Jean Murphy	
2	Kelly deBernard	
3		Carl & Brenda Cuthbertson
6	Jackson Moehlenkamp	
8	Mark Moehlenkamp	Rob & Susan Gilliam
13	Harrison Bell	
21	Dot Hogan, Janette Walker	
24	Teddy Soto	
27	Jerry Moore	
29	Chip Roark	
30	June Lee	
31		Garry & Dana Taylor